

4. Subbasin Assessment – Summary of Past and Present Pollution Control Efforts

DEQ was unable to obtain specific data on nonpoint source pollution control projects within the Big Lost River watershed from the agencies that administer these programs including the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Agricultural Extension Program of the University of Idaho, or the State Soil Conservation Commission. There is at least one known project on lower Antelope Creek that involves planting riparian vegetation to improve streambank stability and provide shading to the stream. It is assumed that there are other projects of this nature in the watershed that are undocumented. Data was not submitted by the Nature Conservancy, BLM or Idaho Department of Fish and Game regarding the Thousand Springs project in the upper watershed.

Programs that would reduce nonpoint source pollution that could be implemented include:

- The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) reduces erosion and enhances wildlife habitat by encouraging farmers to convert highly erodible cropland to vegetative cover in exchange for an annual rental payment.
- Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) was established in the 1996 Farm Bill to provide assistance for farmers and ranchers for improvement projects. The program was specifically designed for areas with serious threats to soil and water quality.
- The Resource Conservation and Development Program (RCRD) program is funded through grants authorized by the Idaho Legislature to finance projects focused on improving rangeland and riparian areas.
- The Water Quality Program for Agriculture (WQPA), formerly known as State Agriculture Water Quality Program (SAWQP), provides financial incentives to owners and operators of agriculture lands to apply conservation practices to protect and enhance water quality and fish and wildlife habitat.
- Long Term Agreements (LTA) are binding agreements between the NRCS or the conservation districts and landowner participants that provides cost-sharing for a conservation project aimed at protecting water, soil, and related resources.

The Forest Service has a 1,200 acre riparian management demonstration project on the East Fork of the Big Lost River below Corral Creek. There has been no expansion of this demonstration project to other areas on the East Fork, or to other subbasins in the watershed.

The City of Mackay Waste Treatment Facility has applied for an NPDES permit to replace the expired permit that they are operating under. Approval and implementation of this permit is expected in March, 2004. The Mackay State Fish Hatchery, and the Lost River Hatchery are operating under a General NPDES permit for aquaculture facilities. The general permit was implemented in 1999 and requires facilities to develop a specific monitoring plan and quality assurance plan to meet the requirements of the General Permit.